

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8020

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 13472

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINR, PFOR, PLOS, NI

SUBJ: NEW ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. FMG ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 26 APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY-GENERAL (A-G) AND COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE DAN IBEKWE AS PRESIDENT OF NEW FEDERAL COURT OF APPEAL. NEW ATTORNEY-GENERAL IS DR. AUGUSTINE NNAMANI, FORMER A-G OF ANAMBRA STATE. APPOINTMENTS EFFECTIVE FROM DEC 1, 1976.

2. THOUGH PRESIDENCY OF NEW COURT IS IMPORTANT POST, IT PROBABLY WILL NOT BE SO MUCH IN MAINSTREAM OF FMG POLICY MAKING AS ATTORNEY GENERALSHIP, WHICH CARRIES WITH IT MEMBERSHIP ON FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. THUS WITH TRANSFER OF IBEKWE, EMBASSY MAY LOSE ONE OF ITS MOST EFFECTIVE FRIENDS IN HIGHER COUNCILS OF FMG (SEE LAGOS 11291 AND 9358 --GUTHRIE-SPRIGGS CASE). IBEKWE MAY CONTINUE TO HAVE DIRECT PERSONAL ACCESS TO HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO, BUT HIS WEIGHT IN BALANCE BETWEEN PRAGMATISTS AND RADICALS WILL BE MISSED.

3. IN ADDITION TO SERVING AS A-G, IBEKWE WAS ALSO CHIEF NIGERIAN LAW OF SEA NEGOTIATOR. HE COULD CONCEIVABLY CONTINUE IN THIS RESPONSIBILITY, BUT WILL MOST LIKELY BE REPLACED. NO OBVIOUS SUCCESSOR ON HORIZON, UNLESS IT IS NEW A-G.

4. DR. AUGUSTINE NNAMANI, THE NEW FEDERAL ATTORNEY-GENERAL, IS AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY. BRITISH HEAD OF CHANCERY REMEMBERS MEETING HIM, BUT NOTHING STANDS OUT TO DISTINGUISH HIM FROM SEVERAL OTHER STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HE MET AT SAME TIME. NNAMANI IS 42 YEARS OLD, WAS CALLED TO THE BAR IN 1962, AND SERVED AS
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ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE IN ANAMBRA STATE

AFTER ITS FORMATION EARLIER THIS YEAR. PREVIOUSLY, HE HAD
SERVED AS COMMISSIONER HOUSING, LANDS AND SURVEY IN POST-
GOWON EAST CENTRAL STATE GOVERNMENT.
EASUM

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